



PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2000

CONTACT: Maureen Cragin
Ryan Vaart
(202) 225-2539

GAO REPORT: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAILS TO CUT HEADQUARTERS STAFF LEVELS

According to a General Accounting Office (GAO) report released today, the Department of Defense (DOD) has not complied with a 1999 law that requires DOD to cut headquarters staff levels. "GAO's findings are very disappointing," said House Armed Services Committee Chairman Floyd Spence, "DOD's headquarters staff organizations are badly in need of streamlining, and Congress has repeatedly passed legislation to force such staff reductions. As this report demonstrates, DOD is once again refusing to comply with the law."

In 1999, Congress passed legislation to require DOD to cut its 63,000 headquarters positions by five percent in each of the next three years. However, according to GAO, DOD only plans to cut 2,800 headquarters positions through the end of fiscal year 2001. By failing to distribute the reductions over three years, the 1999 legislation will require DOD to make the bulk of the cuts (approximately 6,700) in fiscal year 2002 alone.

In response to GAO's findings, Spence noted, "The intent of the 1999 law was clear – DOD was to reduce overhead by cutting approximately 9,500 staff positions from its headquarters organizations. To date, DOD has only made firm plans to cut about 2,800 and there is no indication that the Pentagon has any intention whatsoever of making the remaining 6,700 cuts required."

Spence continued, "DOD has enough personnel in its headquarters organizations to man four Army divisions, more than one-third of the United States Marine Corps, or the crews and air wings of ten Navy aircraft carriers. As a long-time advocate for reducing unnecessary overhead at DOD, I remain convinced that transferring 9,500 positions from headquarters staffs into combat units would alleviate many of the manpower shortages the services are experiencing today."

Spence also noted that the Pentagon's delays in implementing the required cuts have placed DOD in a difficult position, "At this point, the Pentagon's foot-dragging may make it unrealistic to expect DOD to make the full 6,700 headquarters personnel cuts required in fiscal year 2002. However, I expect the Pentagon to make a good-faith effort to comply with the law in continuing to streamline its headquarters workforce over the next year. In the meantime, the Pentagon can fully expect that the committee will continue its oversight in this area."

The report (*Defense Headquarters: Status of Efforts to Redefine and Reduce Headquarters Staff*) (GAO/NSIAD-00-224) is available on the House Armed Services Committee website at <http://www.house.gov/hasc>.